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EVOLVING ARMENIAN IMAGE IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE*

(RUS EDEBİYATINDA EVRİLEN ERMENİ İMGESİ)

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Abstract: *In this study, eight works of major and influential poets and authors of Russian literature (A.S. Pushkin, A.S. Griboyedov, A.P. Chekhov, N.A. Teffi, O.E. Mandelshtam and A.G. Bitov) are examined within the context of the Armenian image. The time frame of the conducted research has been limited to the years 1821-1969. The aim of this work is to show how the Armenian image that had been created in Russian literature evolved over time. A.S. Pushkin, A.S. Griboyedov, A.P. Chekhov, N.A. Teffi are compared with those of O.E. Mandelshtam and A.G. Bitov. The works have been analyzed using the text-based analysis method. In addition, a bibliography has been prepared in order to show the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the interest shown to the Armenian Question in Russian literature. This list has been added to the article as an attachment before the bibliography for the perusal of the reader.*

Keywords: *Russian Literature, Armenian image, O.E. Mandelshtam, A.G. Bitov, evolving*

Öz: *Bu çalışmada Rus edebiyatının büyük ve etkili şair ve yazarlarının (A.S. Puşkin, A.S. Griboyedov, A.P. Çehov, N.A. Teffi, O.E. Mandelştam ve A.G.*

* This is the translation by Ahmet Can Öktem of a Turkish-language article authored by Gülsün Yılmaz Gökkis titled "Rus Edebiyatında Evrilen Ermeni İmgesi" that was originally published in the *Ermeni Araştırmaları* journal. The original article was prepared by adding new sources to a chapter of Gülsün Yılmaz Gökkis' master's degree thesis supervised by Prof. Dr. Birsen Karaca titled "Türk, Rus ve Ermeni Edebiyatlarında Ermeni İmgesi" ("Armenian Image in Turkish, Russian, and Armenian Literature"). To view the original article: Gülsün Yılmaz Gökkis, "Rus Edebiyatında Evrilen Ermeni İmgesi," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 59 (2018): 143-172.

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Bitov'un) sekiz eseri Ermeni imgesi baēlamında incelenmektedir. Yapılan arařtırmanın zaman çerçevesi 1821-1969 yılları ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, Rus edebiyatında yaratılan Ermeni imgesinin zaman içinde nasıl evrildiğini somut verilerle göstermektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda A. S. Puşkin, A. S. Griboyedov, A. Çehov, N. A. Teffi'nin eserleri O.E. Mandelştam ve A.G. Bitov'un eserleriyle karşılaştırılmaktadır. Eserler metne baēlı analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, Rus edebiyatında Ermeni Sorununa duyulan ilginin nitelik ve niceliğini gösterebilmek amacıyla bir bibliyografya hazırlanmış ve kaynakçadan önce okurun ilgisine ek olarak sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rus Edebiyatı, Ermeni imgesi, O.E. Mandelştam, A.G. Bitov, evrilme

The aim of this article is to demonstrate, in light of the data we have, the Armenian image in Russian literature, the evolution of this image from the past to the present, and the sources that cultivate this image. The works we have chosen to review in the framework of this aim are the products of authors who have influenced Russian literature or have succeeded to make themselves heard in Russian literature.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the knowledge and perception level of Russian men of culture regarding Armenian culture and literature had the following characteristic:

The 20th century was an important period regarding the Eastern Armenian literature's development in the USSR. In this century, the Soviet people discovered the Armenian literature and scholars began substantially examining Armenian literary history. With the motivation borne out of the developments that had taken place during the first quarter of this century, Armenians had entered the Russians' field of interest along with the other Soviet peoples: This interest was in the form of the people in the Soviet Union being motivated to present their own cultural values to the other "fellow peoples" in Russian. However, there were also these developments in the past of this interest: In the meeting of the Armenian Committee of Moscow on 15 October 1914 under the presidency of Stepanos Mamikonyan, it was decided to collect about 1 million Rubles that would be spent on national culture-related expenses. A large portion of this number would be reserved for the preparation of an Armenian poem anthology by the famous Russian poet Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov.¹ Maxim Gorky's *Collection of Armenian Literature* (*Сборник армянской литературы*; 1916) titled work that was written during the same period also aimed to present Armenian culture. Along with Veselovski, Bryusov, and Gorky; Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Blok, Konstantin Dmitriyevich Balmont, Ivan Aleksiyevich Bunin and many other authors that had an esteemed place in the world of Russian literature were persuaded to present Armenian literature through translation. The only problem was that, none of these authors knew Armenian but Veselovski. Bryusov, the redactor of the anthology titled *Poetry of Armenia* (*Поэзия Армении*) printed in 1916, had stated his thoughts in the work's preface; "I had not guessed that a work like this would grant me things of value."² The fact that he expressed that he had refused the offer the first time he was consulted to prepare an anthology, resulting in the intervention of M. Gorky, points to the fact that Armenian literature was not known in the Russian literature world during the mentioned periods.³

1 For more detail regarding the subject, please see: Вирсен Караджа, "В. Я. Врюсов как Переводчик Армянской Поэзии," (Диссертация, Москва: Московский Государственный Университет им. М. В. Ломоносова, Филологический Факультет, 1999), 61.

2 *Поэзия Армении*, ред: Валерия Брюсов (Московского Армянского Комитета, 1916), 4; Birsen Karaca, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Seçkisi* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001), 17.

3 For more detail regarding the subject: Birsen Karaca, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Seçkisi*, 12-13.

After this point, in order to portray the evolution regarding the Armenian image mentioned in the beginning of the article, we will go back to the first half of the 19th century and examine the works in order of their date of writing.

The first work that we will examine with this aim is “Gavriiliada”,⁴ which is among Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin’s (1799-1837)⁵ early works. The work, which is written in the form of a verse novel, was completed in 1821 but was not published due to censorship. The full text of the work was published for the first time in Russian between 1918-1922.⁶ However, this work was accidentally published with the title “Gavriliada”.⁷ The work was first published in Turkish in 2012.⁸ The work is formed of 39 stanzas, the number of verses in the stanzas vary.

The main character of “Gavriiliada” is the angel Gavriil.⁹ The subject of the work was taken from the old testament. However, before Pushkin, French poet Evariste de Parny (1753-1814) had discussed the subject in his work titled *The War of The Gods* (1799). Young Pushkin may have possibly been influenced by de Parny.¹⁰

In the verse novel, events that are assumed to have occurred between a young Jewish girl Mariya (Mary), God, God’s messenger angel Gavriil and the Devil are described. In the narration of the events, the motifs of love, sexuality, and ambition stand out. The reason why “Gavriiliada” is of interest to us is Pushkin’s line which expresses that he had learned of the things he mentions in the work from an Armenian myth.

“<...>

Then, calling his favorite, Gavriil,
He expressed his love in plain language.
Their church hid their conversations from us,

4 “Гавриилиада” *Русская Виртуальная Библиотека*, accessed March 15, 2018
<http://rvb.ru/pushkin/01text/02poems/01poems/0786.htm>

5 The Armenian image in Pushkin’s works has been presented in detail as a presentation titled “The Armenian Image in the Works of A. S. Pushkin” in the international symposium conducted in April 21, 2018 by TEBAREN on the subject of “Ermeni Mezalimin 100. Yılında Tarihi Gerçekler” (“Historical Facts on the 100. Year of the Armenian Atrocity”).

6 “Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор”*, accessed July 18, 2013,
<http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

7 The real name of the work is “Gavriiliada”. The faulty print mentioned above has one “i” missing.

8 Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin, *Poemalar*. Translated by: Kayhan Yükseler (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2012).

9 God’s messenger angel. Its Turkish equivalent is Cebrail, its English equivalent is Gabriel.

10 “Évariste de Parny”, *Wikipedia*, accessed July 18, 2013,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89variste_de_Parny

The Evangelist¹¹ made a little mistake!
 But an **Armenian myth** says the following,
 The lord of heaven, without waiting for praises,
 Chose archangel as the Mercury¹²
 Noticing in him the mind and the talent, -
 And in the evening sent him to Mariya.
 It was another honor that passed through the archangel's heart:
 He was often happy with the emissary tasks;
 To carry little bitty notes and news
 Though the work was profitable, he possessed honor.
 And the son who was fond of glory, hiding what lay in his heart,
 Became the complaisant sycophant by obligation
 Lord of the heavens ... but procurer of the earth.
 <...>

(Translated from Russian to Turkish by: Birsen Karaca)

There are various views regarding Pushkin expressing an Armenian myth in “Gavriliada”:¹³ Even though S.M. Shvartsband claims that the “Armenian myth” is word game completely attributable to Pushkin¹⁴, M.P. Alekseyev is of the belief that the myth is not simple fiction.¹⁵ The only source that we can find which addresses the “Armenian myth” mentioned in “Gavriliada” is M.F. Muryanov’s work titled *From Commentaries about Pushkin’s Works (Из комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям)*.¹⁶ According to Muryanov,

11 Evangelism, which means to “turn towards the holy book”, is based on the belief that born-again Christians will be brought to heaven and be rewarded with great joy/ecstasy as a part of the will of God. *Dergipark*, accessed July 17, 2013, <http://journals.istanbul.edu.tr/tr/index.php/iktisatsosyoloji/article/view/4774/4337>

12 In the work titled *Poemalar*, Kayhan Yükseler translated the word *Меркурий* in the verse novel with the template “В Меркурии” by its meaning in the astronomy field. Whereas in old times, the word *Меркурий* meant messenger of the gods. Словари и энциклопедии на Академике, accessed May 3, 2018, https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic_fwords/42435/МЕРКУРИЙ. This error made by Yükseler has led to a semantic shift in the work. There are similar errors in the translation.

13 For views on this, please see: “Ужель загадку разрешила?..,” *Журнальный зал*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/79/ko49.html> ; “Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm> ; “Заметки о «Гавриилиаде»,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, http://feb-web.ru/feb/classics/critics/alekseev_m/a72/a72-281.htm

14 “Ужель загадку разрешила?..,” *Журнальный зал*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2006/79/ko49.html>

15 “Заметки о «Гавриилиаде»,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, http://feb-web.ru/feb/classics/critics/alekseev_m/a72/a72-281.htm

16 “Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор*,” accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

the myth Pushkin mentioned lives on in Armenian culture.¹⁷ In addition, the same researcher states that the studies conducted on the myth have not yet succeeded in producing results. In Muryanov's article, the Armenians' process of accepting Christianity is examined: According to the information provided by the researcher, the permission for the publishing of the Holy Book in Armenian in the Russian Empire was granted in 1817, meaning a very late period. This was because the Armenian church's stance, which did not accept the decisions adopted at the Chalcedon Council¹⁸ (Kadıköy Council¹⁹, 451) and all subsequent world councils convened regarding Christianity, was considered to be a monophysitic deviance. "*The Armenian church, which did not complete its own dogmatic evolution and had separated from the universal church -its mother, remained as a premature (child) that did not have full consciousness of faith.*"²⁰

Discussions aside, in this work of Pushkin,²¹ it is interesting that he refers to an "Armenian Myth" while explaining his skeptical approach towards Christianity.

The second work that we will examine according to the chronological order is the work of A.S. Griboyedov²² titled the "Yerevan Journey" ("Эриванский поход"). This work is formed of A.S. Griboyedov's journey to Yerevan between 12 May-1 July 1827 and his notes in the style of a diary. The author, whose trip began with arriving to Kars from St. Petersburg, noted information regarding the quality of the camps he stayed at, the people he met and formed relations with, what he saw throughout the journey, the places he passed, and his daily experiences. Griboyedov also mentions the Armenian priests he had seen along the way. The author, who subsequently passed by the Georgian gate, mentions the Alagöz settlement which is currently inside Armenian borders. Afterwards, he mentions Ağrı Mountain (Mount Ararat), Aras River, Aştarak (Ashtarak) Village, Etchmiadzin, Erevan (Yerevan), Arpaçay (Arpachay River). During this journey, the author went all the way to Nakhchivan.²³

17 "Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям," *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека "Русская Литература и Фольклор"*, accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

18 Словари и энциклопедии на Академике, accessed July 18, 2013, http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/brokgauz_efron/109651/%D0%A5%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9

19 "Kalkedon Konsili," *İncil Tarihi*, accessed May 3, 2018, http://inciltarihi.com/hristijanlik-tarihi/konsiller_donemi/kalkedon-konsili/

20 "Из Комментариев к Пушкинским Произведениям," *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека "Русская Литература и Фольклор"*, accessed July 18, 2013, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/pushkin/serial/vr/vr-0732.htm>

21 In his youth years, Pushkin displays a skeptical approach towards religion. "Пушкин и религия," *Журнальный зал*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://magazines.russ.ru/voplit/2004/3/ras4.html>

22 For detailed information about the author: А.С. Грибоедов, *Грибоедов.net*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.griboedov.net>

23 For the entire work, please see: А.С. Грибоедов, *Грибоедов.net*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.griboedov.net/proizvedeniya/put10.shtml>

A third work we will examine also belongs to Pushkin. “Tazit”²⁴ is a verse novel that the author had written in between the end of 1829 and the beginning of 1830, after his trip to Caucasia. This work was published in parts in 1837 by Jukovski in the *Sovremennik* journal under the title “Galub”.²⁵ Today, this verse novel of Pushkin is being printed and referred to with the main character’s name Tazit.²⁶ The first Turkish print of the verse novel was made in 2012.²⁷

This is roughly the subject of “Tazit”: The son of an old Circassian named Gasub was killed by the enemy. At the funeral, an old man brings to Gasub his other son Tazit, which Gasub had brought to him thirteen years ago in order for him to “create a brave Chechenian”. Gasub hopes to find solace in his son Tazit’s presence. For Gasub, Tazit is the only son who can avenge his dead son. However, Tazit lets Gasub’s hopes down. Tazit is a withdrawn, “lazy” and “rebellious” youngster who constantly runs to the mountains and does not return for days. He had seen his brother’s killer wounded in the mountains, but did not avenge his brother, just like the Hamlet character created by Shakespeare. Gasub curses Tazit because of this behavior and throws him out of the house.

The reason why this verse novel of Pushkin is in our review is because of the Armenian image it presents. The Armenian image portrayed in the dialogues between one of the work’s characters Gasub and his son Tazit is as follows:

Father:

Where were you, son?

Son:

In the rocky canyon,
In the place were rocky shore splits
And where the road opens to Daryal [Darial].

24 “Тазит,” *Русская Виртуальная Библиотека*, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://rvb.ru/pushkin/01text/02poems/01poems/0792.htm>

25 In the verse novel, the name of the protagonist Tazit’s father is Gasub. The reason it is written as Galub is probably due to Jukovski’s misreading. See: “Гасуб, а Не Галуб,” *Фундаментальная электронная библиотека “Русская Литература и Фольклор,”* accessed July 21, 2013, http://feb-web.ru/feb/classics/critics/bondi_s/bon/bon-054-.htm

26 Mark Altshuler, “Motif in Sir Walter Scott’s The Fair Maid of Perth and Aleksandr Puskin’s Tazit,” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/308925?uid=2134&uid=4582702647&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=4582702637&uid=60&sid=21102172417603>

27 Pushkin, *Poemalar*; 195-209.

Father:

What were you doing there?

Son:

I was listening to Terek.

Father:

So, you did not see any Georgians or Russians?

Son:

I saw an Armenian
Riding to Tiflis [Tbilisi] with his merchandise.

Father:

Did he have guards?

Son:

No, he was alone.

Father:

Why did you not think of felling him
To the ground with a surprise blow?
And why did you not spring out from the cliff?
The Circassian's son cast his eyes down
Unable to give any reply.

<...>

Tazit again gets on his horse.
Disappears for two days and two nights.
On the third day he returns home,
Pale like death.
Seeing him, his father asks:
“Where have you been?”

Son:

Close to the edge of the forest
Around the Village of Kuban.

Father:

Who did you see?

Son:

The enemy.

Father:

Who? Who?

Son:

My brother's murderer.

Father:

My son's murderer!

Come closer!.. Where is his head?

Tazit!.. I require that head.

Give it so that I can look at it to my heart's content!

Son:

The murderer

He was alone, wounded, unarmed.

Father:

You've not forgotten the debt of blood!...

You knocked the enemy down on his back,

Is it not true? You drew your sword,

You thrust the steel into his throat

And silently twisted it thrice,

You passed out from his moans

His snake-like death...

Where is his head?.. Give it... I've no strength left...

The son, however, casting down his eyes, fell silent.

And Gasub became like a black night

And shouted at his son in rage:

“Get out - You're no son of mine

You're no Chechen - you're an old woman,

You're a coward, a slave, you're an Armenian.”

In the verses above, it is striking that Gasub associates the negative traits that he sees in Tazit to the Armenian image he has in his mind. On the other hand, Gasub's words to his son Tazit in a moment of anger provides evidence of how deeply the young Pushkin had observed the people and communities he had communicated with in his visit to Caucasia. From a different angle, these words enable us to evaluate the sense of courage and fear maintained in the social memory of the people in Caucasia.

The other work of Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin that is subject to our article is *Journey to Erzurum (Путешествие в Арзрум)*. In the second chapter of this work which is formed of four chapters, Pushkin informs on Armenia's appearance, climate, a village which he did not name, and the Ağrı Mountain. During his journey spanning to Erzurum, Pushkin also visited Kars. An Armenian family whose home he stayed in for a night was also referred to in Pushkin's work. Pushkin expresses this family's little son Artemi's interest for war and defined him with the sentence "<...> on a Turkish stallion, with a flexible Kurdish lance in his hand, with a dagger in his waistband, he was galloping next to me talking of Turks and war."²⁸ In this work, the Armenians' interest towards Turks and war was presented as an information in between the lines.

In Anton Chekhov's long story titled *In the Ravine* written in 1899, a reference is made to the Armenians' physical features. Anisim of the work's characters states this when describing Samorodov: "<...> You would not believe it. We call him the headman, because he looks like an Armenian, he is pitch-black. <...>"²⁹

Our next study is N.A. Teffi's story titled "From Unwritten Diaries" ("Из дневников ненаписанных").³⁰ Teffi fled her country in 1917 during the October Revolution and went to Paris via Istanbul. In the "From Unwritten Diaries", Teffi describes in an ironic manner the aristocrats who were living in Paris and who thought they were going abroad temporarily with the 1917 Revolution.³¹

In the work, three nationalities that were continuing their lives in Paris are mentioned: the French, Russians and Armenians. The author states that the living conditions in Paris were quite difficult for the Russian aristocrats, however, the Armenians were living prosperous lives. The dinners that an Armenian oilman would host in his home is one the work's topic. In fact, Teffi uses the statement "<...> they had rubbed some mustard even onto their

28 А. Пушкин, "Путешествие в Арзрум," *Золотой Том, Собрание Сочинений*, (Москва: ИМИДЖ, 1993), 666.

29 Anton Çehov, *Ateşler/Çukurda*, Translated by: Birsen Karaca (İstanbul: Dünya Kitapları, 2008), 67.

30 N.A. Teffi, "Yazılmamış Günlüklerden," Translated by: Birsen Karaca, *Patika Kültür, Sanat, Edebiyat Dergisi*, 69, 2010, 12-13.

31 N.A. Teffi, "Yazılmamış Günlüklerden," 12-13.

servants” to imply that the offerings were plenty and the guests were hosted well. A year after beginning to write her work, she continues to use the same statement for the Armenians. Towards the end of her work, Teffi mentions an Armenian named Sh-ian. Without breaking the prosperous Armenian image that has been formed, she continues her ironic approach in the following way:

“They say that the Armenians had again started rubbing mustard even onto their servants. Someone is saying that a large villa in Sh-ian mansion is being assigned to dogs. Fourteen dogs: all have passports, visas and diplomas. The dogs are apparently roaming around in raincoats, shoe covers and hoods during bad weather. They are feeding the dogs with meatballs made of chicken meat.

Our George wishes to go to Sh-ian and ask him to take him instead of the dogs. But all of these are useless, nothing will probably come out of it. Why should he take him in? George is an ordinary nobleman, he does not even have a title.”³²

In the works that we have examined in our article up to this point, we have seen that the authors did not have any concern for creating a special Armenian image and only presented their observations to the reader. However, the last two works that we will be examining have a different characteristic than the other works: These are Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam’s work titled “Journey to Armenia” (“Путешествие в Армению”)³³ and Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov’s work titled “Lessons of Armenia” (“Уроки Армении”)³⁴. Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam and Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov were specifically commissioned to write these two works for the advertisement of Armenia.

What made Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam’s work important for us was Andrei Bitov’s work titled “Lessons of Armenia”. Bitov, who was born during the years Mandelshtam had written his work, completed his work about 35 years after his predecessor poet Mandelshtam. Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia” and Mandelshtam’s “Journey to Armenia” show similarity in terms of structure and content and the two authors were sent to Armenia for almost the same reason. This naturally caught our attention and we thought that it was necessary to examine these two works successively.

The first work we will examine within this context is Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam’s³⁵ work titled “Journey to Armenia”.

32 N.A. Teffi, “Yazılmamış Günlüklerden,” 12-13.

33 Мандельштам, О.Э., “Путешествие в Армению,” *Собрание сочинений в четырех томах*. Том 3. (Москва: 1994), *Lib.Ru: Библиотека Максима Мошкова*, accessed May 4, 2018, <http://lib.ru/%3E%3C/POEZIQ/MANDELSHTAM/armenia.txt>

34 Битов, Андрей. “Уроки Армении (Путешествие в небольшую страну),” *Воскресный День*. (Москва: Советская Россия, 1980).

35 3 January 1891-27 December 1938.

In 1929, Nikolay Ivanovich Buharin³⁶ asked the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia's People's Commissioner Chairman Ter Gabrielyan that famous poet Mandelshtam be sent to Armenia to conduct any work in the field of art and literature. A positive response to Buharin's request came ten days later from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia's People's Commissioner for Education A.A. Mravyan. Mravyan offered the poet to give lectures at a university on Russian and the history of Russian literature. However, with the People's Commissioner passing away on November 1929, this plan was postponed for a year.³⁷ In 1930, with Buharin's help, the poet was sent to Armenia to write a work that described Armenia to earn his livelihood. This work in the form of an essay was serialized in 1933 in the *Star (Звезда)* journal.

"Journey to Armenia" is formed of eight parts:

The first part of the work is titled "Sevan" ("Севан"). Sevan was the first stop in the Armenia trip Osip Mandelshtam had made with his wife. The Russian poet and his wife stayed at the monastery close to the Sevan Lake. In this part, detailed descriptions are made regarding the Sevan Lake. This part also provides information on Armenian culture.

The title of the second part is "Ashot Ovanesyan" ("Ашот Ованесьян"). Mandelshtam refers to a person named Ashot Ovanesyan in this part. This person is an academic. While the Russian poet is expressing Ovanesyan's physical traits and providing information about his character, he attributes Ovanesyan's features to the whole of Armenian people as well. Moreover, in this part information is given regarding the Eastern Peoples' Institute where Ovanesyan was working.

"Moscow" ("Москва") is the title of the third and longest part of the work. Under the title "Moscow", the poet makes a comparison of the USSR's capital Moscow with the places he visited in Armenia. Information is given on the university he visited in Armenia and the educators he has met. Moreover, in this part, it is stated that Mandelshtam had been to Armenia before, therefore the aforementioned trip was not his first one.

The fourth part is titled "Sukhum" ("Сухум"). Sukhum, also known as Sukhumi, is a settlement that is the capital of the Republic of Abkhazia and which has a coast on the Black Sea. Mandelshtam's Sukhum is described as "a city of mourning, tobacco, and scented oils". Moreover, in this part, information is given regarding the structure and difficulty of the Abkhaz language and other languages in Caucasia.

36 For detailed information of the person: "Николай Иванович Бухарин," *Словари и энциклопедии на Академике*, accessed May 3, 2018, http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc_biography/14673/%D0%91%D1%83%D1%85%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD

37 For detailed information on the subject, please see: "Проблемный очерк: «Четвертая проза» и путевой очерк: «Путешествие в Армению»," accessed October 10, 2013, <http://do.gendocs.ru/docs/index-88465.html?page=4>

In the part titled “French” (“Французь”), Mandelshtam’s interest is focused on the world-renowned painters: Such as Renuar, Van Gogh, Picasso, and Claude Monet. Additionally, in this part, the poet mentions approaches regarding beliefs.

“Naturalist Circles” (“Вокруг натуралистов”) is a part in which the poet continues to write on the approaches regarding beliefs. In this part, Mandelshtam brings forward the “theory evolution” and writes his observations on animals. Furthermore, he makes references to artists and litterateurs who are among the world classics.

“Ashtarak” (“Аштарак”) is the seventh part of Mandelshtam’s work. Ashtarak is a residential area inside the current borders of Armenia. In his essay, the Russian poet allocates a broad part for a description of the Ashtarak city. It seems that the poet had taken it upon himself to watch Ağrı Mountain from there. Mandelshtam emphasizes that Ashtarak is more ancient than many European cities. He also states in this essay that the city is famous for its bards and harvest festivals. In this part, it seems that Mandelshtam had found an interesting game for himself: He shares with his readers the pleasure he gets from saying words in Armenian that were forbidden to said in Russian during the USSR period.

The last essay in the work is titled “Mount Alagöz” (“Алагез”). In this part, the poet mentions a settlement called Byurakan. Byurakan will be discussed later in our article where we will examine Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia”.

In this essay compilation titled “Journey to Armenia”, there are 30 characters in total. Almost all of these characters are Armenian. All of them, who are middle-aged and mostly male, are portrayed positively.

The most salient feature in the work is the effort displayed by Osip Mandelshtam in creating an Armenian type. We can list the general features of this type as: intelligent, handsome or beautiful, educated, and having a good profession.

Moving onto to the other work, “Lessons of Armenia” is a 125-page travel essay written by Andrei Bitov between 1967-1969. The author was sent to Armenia for ten days by the newspaper he was working to write on Armenia. The Armenia impressions that were meant to be prepared for the newspaper were published about a year later in the form of travel notes similar to Mandelshtam’s “Journey to Armenia”.³⁸

The work is formed of 8 parts, just like Mandelshtam’s “Journey to Armenia”.

38 Birsen Karaca, “Ermeni Sorunu ile İlgili Olarak Toplumsal Bellek Oluşturmak Yönünde Ermeni Kitle İletişim Araçlarının Oynadığı Rol,” Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, *Journal of Social Sciences* 7, (2003): 57-64, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/154818>

In the first part titled “Language Lesson” (“Урок языка”), the author states his first impressions of Armenia’s capital Yerevan and provides information on Matenadaran, the biggest library in Armenia.³⁹ Additionally, Bitov shares the meanings of some Armenian words with the reader.

In the second part titled “History Lesson” (“Урок истории”), Bitov informs the reader on a famous historian of the Armenians, Leo, and the country’s borders. In this part (in the section titled “The Book”), the author provides information by opening a random page from an academic book⁴⁰ that he states he had found by coincidence. It seems that the author was engaged in Armenian propaganda, as the said section contains the following accusations towards Turkey and the Turks:⁴¹

“Residents were killed in some of the villages, -others were only pillaged. Many people, together with priests, were forcefully converted to Islam, churches were converted to mosques.

Most of the Hizan village was pillaged and was condemned to death. Girls and women were raped, many families were forcefully converted to Islam. <...> The city of Siirt was condemned to death; shops and houses pillaged-”.⁴²

The subsequent five parts of the work are as follows:

In the part titled “Geography Lesson” (“Урок географии”), information is given on the structure of the city, Mount Masis, the Sevan Lake and the Ağrı Mountain.

“A Captive of the Caucasus” (“Кавказский пленник”) is the part which explains the Armenian traditions and a residential area called Aparan.

“Geghard” (“Гехард”) is a part written specifically for the Gehard Monastery and Garni Temple.

In the part titled “Passions of a City Planner (“Страсти градостроителя”), Andrei Bitov openly emulates Mandelshtam and compares St. Petersburg and Yerevan. At this point, St. Petersburg is the aspect that saves Andrei Bitov from mimicking Mandelshtam; as Mandelshtam had chosen Moscow to make a comparison. Another aspect that catches our attention in this part is the character who is presented to the reader as a city planner. This person is the

39 For detailed information: ՄԱՏԵՆԱԴԱՐԱՆ Մ.Մաշտոցի անվան հին ձեռագրերի գիտահետազոտական ինստիտուտ, accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.matenadaran.am/v2_2/

40 For the book’s name, please see: Андрей Битов, “Уроки Армении (Путешествие в небольшую страну),” *Воскресный День*, 289.

41 For another article of the author regarding this subject in a different source: “Битов Андрей Георгиевич/Уроки Армении,” Армянская энциклопедия фонда «Хайазг», accessed May 3, 2018, http://ru.hayazg.info/Битов_Андрей_Георгиевич/Уроки_Армении

42 Андрей Битов, “Уроки Армении (Путешествие в небольшую страну),” *Воскресный День*, 289.

ideal Armenian type. The author highlights how this person is physically very attractive, green-eyed, and well-groomed. The city planner has an idiosyncratic way of speaking and has a modern appearance, is modest and, according to the author, he is “the representative of Armenians”.

In the part titled “The Patriarch” (“У старца”), there is praise to an Armenian old man. The part also relays the information that Bitov could not go to the city of Byurakan (the one that Mandelshtam had talked about).

“Memories About Agartsin” (“Воспоминание об Агарцине”) is a part written three years after the trip to Armenia. Moreover, information is given on the Agartsin Monastery.

There are close to forty characters mentioned in the work. The reason why we cannot give an exact number is that the number of people in some of the groups that Bitov spent time with is not given exactly. Almost all of these people are Armenian. The person who is constantly mentioned in the work by the author as “friend” is Hrant Matevosyan, who he had met in the scriptwriting course mentioned above.⁴³ Throughout his Armenia trip, Bitov was Matevosyan’s guest.

The numeric distribution of the men and women mentioned in “Lessons of Armenia” is almost the same. The women mentioned in the work are beautiful, while the men are handsome and kind. Bitov does not provide information regarding the educational background of the people he describes.

As we have mentioned above, Bitov is disposed to propagate Armenian propaganda in his work titled “Lessons of Armenia”.

At this point, in order to clarify the picture we have drawn above, we have prepared a table for comparing the famous poet Osip Mandelshtam’s work “Journey to Armenia” to Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia”.

43 See: “Грант Матевосян,” *LiveLib*, accessed May 3, 2018, <https://www.livelib.ru/author/311885-grant-matevosyan>

<p>“Journey to Armenia” (Osip Emiliyevich Mandelshtam)</p>	<p>“Lessons of Armenia” (Andrei Bitov)</p>
<p>The work is formed of 8 parts.</p>	<p>The work is formed of 8 parts.</p>
<p>Mandelshtam was sent to Armenia with the aid of Buharin. The aim was for him to conduct research on Armenia, learn Armenian, and write an article on Armenia and the Armenians.</p>	<p>Bitov was sent to Armenia by the newspaper he was working for. The aim was for him to write a piece for the newspaper on Armenia and the Armenians.</p>
<p>After returning from Armenia, Mandelshtam published the essays, which was a product of this work, in the journal titled Star (Звезда) in the form of a series.</p>	<p>Upon returning from Armenia, Bitov was unable to publish the travel pieces that his newspaper had requested. He received criticism for this issue. One year later, he published his experiences traveling to Armenia in a work titled Bitov’s “Lessons of Armenia”.</p>
<p>The work contains about 30 characters.</p>	<p>The work contains more than 30 characters.</p>
<p>Almost all the characters in the work are Armenian.</p>	<p>Almost all the characters in the work are Armenian.</p>
<p>All of the characters in the work are portrayed in a positive light.</p>	<p>All of the characters in the work are portrayed in a positive light.</p>
<p>There is excessive praise towards some Armenian people.</p>	<p>There is excessive praise towards some Armenian people.</p>
<p>There is admiration for the Armenian language.</p>	<p>There is intense admiration for the Armenian language.</p>
<p>Information is provided on Armenia’s physical and geographical features and educators.</p>	<p>Information is provided on Armenia’s physical and geographical features and architecture.</p>
<p>There is a comparison with the USSR in the work. (Cities, cultures, etc.)</p>	<p>There is a comparison with the USSR in the work. (Cities, architecture, cultures, etc.)</p>
<p>The work propagates Armenian propaganda.</p>	<p>The work propagates Armenian propaganda against Turks.</p>
<p>No implications are made regarding genocide claims in the work.</p>	<p>The author uses statements in the work that support the genocide claims.</p>

In this article, eight works written between 1821-1969 by six authors that belong to the Russian literature were examined in the context of the Armenian image. The first of our reference points while examining the works were the years in which the works were written. This is because it has caught our attention that amongst the works analyzed in our article, the one written after the Second World War (“Lessons of Armenia”) creates an Armenian image that utilizes the genocide claims and the “victim” identity that Armenians use to introduce themselves. This gave us the idea to compare the Armenian image that the author Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov presents in “Lessons of Armenia”

with the Armenian image presented in works that were written before this work. Moreover, due to Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam's work being written before "Lessons of Armenia" and being a source for the Armenian image created by Andrei Bitov, we decided to highlight both of these works.

Unlike the Chechenians in Pushkin's work "Tazit" who were known for their bravery, a denigrated Armenian image is presented through an Armenian who is considered equal to an old woman, a coward, and a slave. By contrast, this image becomes one that is worthy of praise from beginning to end in Mandelshtam's and Bitov's works. Once again, it is not possible to see in Mandelshtam's and Bitov's works the Armenian image presented in Pushkin's work; ambitious for war and hostile towards Turks. Even for the Armenian propaganda propagated in his work, Andrei Bitov learns of the atrocity he mentions not from listening to an Armenian, but from a history book he had randomly obtained. By this way, he does not draw an Armenian image that harbors negative feelings against Turkey. As such, he does not tarnish the Armenian image he presents as being perfect.

The Armenian who is pitch-black and counterfeiter in Chekhov's work turns into a handsome man in Mandelshtam's and Bitov's works. In fact, the "very attractive, green-eyed, and well-groomed" city planner mentioned in Bitov's work is considered to be the "the representative of Armenians" according to the writer.

Lastly, we will point to Teffi's work. In Teffi's narrative titled "From Unwritten Diaries"; in an ironic approach, the Armenian image is presented as one who is very rich but graceless. In Osip Mandelshtam's and Andrei Bitov's works, this Armenian image becomes one that stands out as being victimized, more modest, kind, educated, and an owner of a good profession.

As a result of our comparison work, Andrei Georgiyevich Bitov draws attention as the author who is the representative of the transformation regarding the creations of an Armenian image in Russian literature. The deed that makes Bitov get ahead of Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam is Bitov's propagation of Armenian propaganda in his work titled "Lessons of Armenia".

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